UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Slow deployment of civilian police monitors affecting confidence of people in Serb-controlled suburbs of Sarajevo, says UN spokesman.
- Iran proposes compromise language for draft comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty at Conference on Disarmament.
- Special Committee on Charter begins discussion of compensation to third States affected by Chapter VII sanctions.
- UNESCO says world solar summit will examine how renewable energy can protect environment and bring energy services to rural and remote areas.
- DPI publishes blue book on Iraq-Kuwait conflict.

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The slow deployment of officers from the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) was causing fear and a lack of confidence among the population in Serb-controlled suburbs of Sarajevo, a UN spokesman said today. Long lines of tractors and trucks, packed with personal effects, were jamming the roads to the airport and Pale. Fear and anxiety was spreading from Vogosca to other Serb-held suburbs, which would come under the authority of the Bosnian Federation on March 19. Many residents had already left and schools and banks were closing down, she said.

The United Nations did not want the peace to create tens of thousands of new refugees or new internally displaced persons, the spokesman continued. People must be given a sense of security so they would stay in their homes. Already, 54 IPTF monitors were patrolling the roads between Vogosca and Sarajevo and 19 more would be deployed in Vogosca tomorrow, when 85 Bosnian Federation police were expected to enter the suburb. Up to 25 Serb police might be included in the Federation force, she added.

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To date, 295 civilian police out of an authorized IPTF strength of 1,721 were serving throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and another 174 were in Zagreb waiting to be deployed. There had been many pledges of police for the IPTF, the spokesmen said, and urged Governments to "please put these guys on planes".

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Iran has proposed compromise language for the text of a draft comprehensive test ban treaty, according to a UN Radio report from Geneva. The Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, told the Conference on Disarmament, which is meeting in Geneva, that it was important to perceive a middle ground and develop a package which represented a balanced compromise between the various positions of Governments. The General Assembly has called on the Conference to conclude negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty by the middle of the year so it can be presented to the Assembly before the end of its fiftieth anniversary session in September.

Dr. Velayati offered several proposals to bridge the gap between Non-Aligned members of the Conference and some of the five nuclear powers -- the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, China and France. He suggested the treaty could include a statement of intent to agree on the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, within a time bound framework. Referring to China's position that peaceful nuclear testing should still be permitted, he said the door should stay open for possible future scientific research on civilian applications, but only if their usefulness could be demonstrated and recognized universally and if the tests were strictly monitored.

The test ban treaty should rely on internationally collected data rather than on national monitoring systems, he continued. Intrusive on-site inspections could be conducted if violations were suspected or if two thirds of the future test ban treaty executive council agreed so as to prevent frivolous or abusive inspections. Nuclear test sites should be closed and equipment specifically designed for nuclear testing should be destroyed.

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The right to compensation for third States affected by United Nations sanctions should not be a precondition when applying measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, according to the representative of Italy, Mauro Politi, who was also speaking on behalf of the European Union. He was addressing the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.

The establishment of a new permanent mechanism, such as a trust fund, would not be a viable solution or an appropriate response to the problems of third States as they implemented sanctions, Mr. Politi said. The European Union was providing economic and humanitarian help to third States affected by UN sanctions, especially in relation to the situation in the former Yugoslavia. In 1995, the Union budgeted 83.5 million European currency units for border crossing infrastructure projects in the Balkans.

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Next September's world solar summit in Zimbabwe will aim to increase understanding of how renewable sources of energy can protect the environment and provide energy services, particularly to rural and remote areas. According to an official from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Luis G. Marques, it was hoped the summit would adopt a 10-year plan of action for renewable energy in the developing world. He was addressing the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development as it met at UN Headquarters yesterday.

Heads of State and Government are expected to attend the summit, at the personal invitation of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. Mr. Marques said that many had expressed skepticism when the summit process began but someone had to "get the ball rolling". There was a real need to improve the lives of 2.5 billion people who had no access to modern energy supplies. Access to renewable energy would improve their health, increase educational opportunities and foster economic development which could reduce urban migration.

Several experts at the Committee meeting asked for information on the two to three billion dollar fund for 300 projects proposed for the 10 years after the summit. Others inquired about a possible list of the projects and how they would be financed. He did not expect 300 projects to be targeted prior to the summit, but he did foresee that number as being realistic over a 10 year period. The question of a global fund would have to be decided at the summit, he added.

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A comprehensive account of the United Nations response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is given in the ninth volume of the "Blue Book" series published this month by the Department of Public Information (DPI). The book is titled The United Nations and the Iraq-Kuwait Conflict, 1990-1996. Its publication coincides with the resumption of discussions between the UN and Iraq on implementation of a Security Council resolution to ease human suffering through the limited sale of Iraqi oil. In his introduction to the book, the Secretary-General writes that throughout its involvement, one of the UN's main concerns has been to alleviate the suffering of Iraqi civilians.

The "Blue Books" series covers major developments of the past fifty years in which the United Nations has played a leading role. The series is designed to provide primary research and reference tools to historians, policy makers, journalists and others interested in a deeper understanding of work of the Organization.

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council condemns lack of effective measures to enable Serb refugees to return to Croatia; demands Government ensure local Serbs can exercise rights.

* UN civilian Police Monitors accompany Bosnian Federation police and IFOR troops as they enter Serbian suburb of Sarajevo; exodus of Serbs continues.

* New Prosecutor for International Criminal Tribunals for Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda appointed; Justice Richard Goldstone will stay in post until October.

* Preparations proceed for national elections in Sierra Leone.

* United Nations-sponsored negotiations between Guatemalan parties begin in Mexico City.

* Special Committee on Charter told Security Council veto should be reviewed and membership expanded.

* Winners of 1996 UN Population Award announced as drastic US funding cuts to international population programmes go into effect.

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The Security Council today condemned the fact that effective measures had not been taken so far to enable refugees from Croatia to return and called on the Croatian Government to ensure the expeditious processing of all requests from refugees. In a statement read by its President, Madeleine Albright (United States), the Council demanded that the Government take measures to ensure local Serbs can exercise their rights to remain, leave or return to their homes in safety and dignity and reclaim their property. It also called on Croatia to consider granting amnesty to local Serbs still being detained because of their alleged participation in last year's conflict.

The Council called on the Government to rescind its earlier suspension

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of articles of constitutional law affecting the rights of minorities, and establish a human rights court. It reminded Croatia that the promotion of strict respect for the rights of the Serb minority was relevant to the successful implementation of the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium of 12 November 1995.

In its statement, the Council acknowledged that human rights violations had been greatly reduced but expressed concern at reports of isolated incidents of killings and other violations. It also acknowledged that Croatia had achieved significant progress in alleviating the humanitarian plight of the mostly elderly Serb population still living there. The Council said it looked to the Government to vigorously prosecute those suspected of past violations of humanitarian law and human rights against local Serbs. It welcomed Croatia's agreement to the establishment of a long-term mission by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor human rights throughout the country.

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Monitors from the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) accompanied 30 police from the Bosnian Federation and troops from the Implementation Force (IFOR) today, as they entered Sarajevo's Serbian-suburb of Vogosca. A United Nations spokesman said about 70 out of a planned 90 UN civilian police monitors were patrolling the area. So far, there had been no incidents but the Serb exodus from the suburb was continuing and a UN helicopter had been sent to rescue a group of people trapped on a mountain outside the city.

According to United Nations estimates, between 1,500 and 2,500 Serbs were still in Vogosca and around 17,000 had already left, the spokesman said. There were also population movements out of other Serb suburbs. People had burned their own homes, as well as a school, apartment complex and supermarket and there was obviously a campaign of disinformation, she said. The Serb's fear could be stemmed if IPTF forces were deployed as quickly as possible. To date, 300 civilian police officers out of IPTF's 1,721 authorized strength were now serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with 183 in the Sarajevo region and 158 waiting in Zagreb for deployment.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Justice Louise Arbour, a member of the Court of Appeal for Ontario, Canada, as Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. According to a United Nations spokesman, the current Prosecutor, Justice Richard Goldstone of South Africa, will stay on in his post until 1 October.

Justice Arbour was previously a trial judge for the High Court of

Justice, Supreme Court of Ontario and an Associate Professor and Associate Dean at the Osgoode Hall Law School of York University. She has taught criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence and droit civil and has published extensively on criminal law, human rights, civil liberties and gender issues. Until her appointment to the bench, Justice Arbour was Vice-President of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. She is currently on leave from the Court of Appeals and is presiding over an inquiry into problems at the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario.

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A meeting between representatives of the Government of Sierra Leone and members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) will take place in Abidjan tomorrow, according to a United Nations spokesman. The meeting was particularly important because Presidential and Parliamentary elections were scheduled for Monday, she said. The Secretary-General's Special Representative, and representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) will attend the meeting.

About 80 international observers will monitor the elections and the United Nations Electoral Assistance Mission, which has been in the country for some time, will also provide six people to help the electoral process.

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United Nations-sponsored talks between the Guatemalan Government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) began yesterday in Mexico City, according to a UN spokesman. The current round of talks will focus on socio-economic issues.

The United Nations moderator for the Guatemalan peace talks, Jean Arnault, and the ambassadors of Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, Venezuela and the United States were also attending the negotiations, the spokesman added.

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The Security Council's veto power should be reviewed and its membership expanded to reflect new demographic, political and economic realities, the representative of Indonesia told the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization this morning. He said the Council would be more representative of the UN's increased membership and assure greater transparency in decision-making. The community of nations should be based on equality, equity and transparency in representation as well as in the decision-making process.

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A leading Philippine advocate for population polices and programmes, Leticia Ramos-Shahani, and Pathfinder International, a United States-based non-governmental organization, will share the United Nations 1996 Population Award. The award is presented annually to individuals and institutions which have made outstanding contributions to increasing awareness of population problems and solutions. Each winner will receive a diploma, a gold medal and $12,500 in prize money.

For more than 30 years, Ms. Shahani, a member of the Philippine senate, has been a leader on population and its impact on social development, public health and environmental sustainability. She has spearheaded efforts in the national legislature and by the Government to address population issues and has also been active internationally, particularly in Asia. Pathfinder International, was chosen for its work for over 38 years to develop and improve family planning programmes and create awareness on population issues. Since 1957, it has pioneered many advances in family planning by investing in people and organizations that provide family planning services to those most in need. It has contributed funds to launch 29 family planning associations.

Meanwhile, new United States funding cuts will affect millions of women and children in the developing world who will have their access to family planning and contraceptive services cut off, according to Ms. Marilyn Edmunds from Pathfinder International. She told correspondents the cuts would be "fairly drastic" and population programmes funded through US-AID would spend around $200 million less this year than in 1995, with a resulting increase in maternal mortality and more abortions. There would be some 10 million more unwanted births, 3 million abortions, at least half million infant deaths and tens of thousands of maternal deaths in 1996.

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